

# Everyone Goes Home “SAFE”!

## STRAIN & SPRAIN INJURIES

Strains and sprain injuries are some of the most preventable injuries, but we continue to have both employees and contractors report these injuries. Year-to-date in 2012, forty (40) strains/sprains were sustained. Our number one goal is to prevent the injury from occurring at all.



Workers who must often lift, stoop, kneel, twist, grip, stretch, reach overhead, or work in other awkward positions to do a job are at risk of developing a work-related musculoskeletal disorder (WMSD) such as back problems, carpal tunnel syndrome, and tendonitis to name a few. Bending, stooping, kneeling, or squatting can cause pain in the lower back or knees. Over time serious muscle or joint injuries may occur. The risk is higher if you stoop or kneel often or for long periods of time. It is also higher if you twist your body while working in these positions. These positions can also make it harder to do your job. When stooping or kneeling, you can't lift, push, or pull as much weight without putting stress on your body.

### Injuries & Disorders



**Lower back:** The spine runs from the top of the neck down to the lower back. It is made up of many bones called vertebrae, one below another. Between the vertebrae are joints and discs which give the back flexibility so it can move. The discs are flexible because of the jelly-like substance inside.

When you bend forward, your back muscles have to work harder; the ligaments flex & stretch while the discs get squeezed causing pain.

Twisting your body while bending puts even more pressure on the discs, and more stress on the cartilage and ligaments, especially when you are exerting force to lift, push, or pull objects.

### Warm Up & Stretching:

#### Back:

With feet at shoulder distance apart, bend from the waist, roll shoulders forward and attempt to reach toes with outstretched arms. Bend slightly at the knees then slowly rise to upright position and straighten the shoulders.

Place hands on the hips, raise the chin and bend slightly backward. Repeat both of the above back stretches 5 times.

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## **Upper Body Rotation:**

Place hands behind head and slowly rotate the upper body one side, hold 1 – 2 seconds and repeat on the other side. Do Not Bounce or Jerk. Repeat 3-5 times each side.

## **Knee:**

The knee is the largest joint in the body. Tasks that involve frequent stooping, kneeling, or squatting may increase the risk of injury or developing bursitis, tendonitis or arthritis in the knee.

Floor-level work cannot be eliminated from some jobs, but it is possible to change how the job is done.

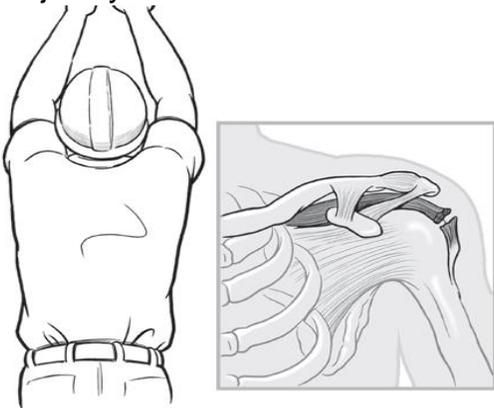
Sometimes people work on the floor because it is the only large flat work area available. This increases the amount of stooping or kneeling that is necessary. Rather than stooping to the floor, try to raise the job to waist height using tables, sawhorses to improvise a workbench.

## **Warm Up & Stretching: Knee Rotation**

Feet together, knees slightly bent, place hands on the sides of the knees and roll them in a circular motion. Allow the heels to come off the ground. This will work the knees and ankles at the same time. Repeat 10 times.

## **Shoulder:**

Some jobs you need to work overhead, reaching up with one or both arms raised above your shoulders. The head may be tilted back, looking up to see the work. Overhead work puts stress on the shoulders and neck.



Most problems in the shoulder involve the muscles, ligaments, and tendons, rather than the bones. Athletes are especially susceptible to shoulder problems. In athletes, shoulder problems can develop slowly through repetitive, intensive training routines.

**Here are some easy shoulder exercises that you can do to strengthen your shoulder muscles and prevent injuries.**

## **Basic shoulder strengthening**

Attach elastic tubing to a doorknob at home. Gently pull the elastic tubing toward your body. Hold for a count of five. Repeat five times with each arm. Perform twice a day.

## **Wall push-ups**



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Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall and your feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly perform a push-up. Repeat five times. Hold for a count of five. Perform twice a day.

### **Shoulder press-ups**

Sit upright in a chair with armrest, with your feet touching the floor. Use your arms to slowly rise off the chair. Hold for a count of five. Repeat five times. Perform twice a day.

### **Reduce the Risk of Injuries:**

- Elevate low work to optimum heights by using platforms, steps, or lifts
- Lower the employee to optimum height to work with kneepads or cushions
- Use mechanical lift devices
- Reduce weight or size of equipment to be moved
- Get help to move objects over 75 pounds
- Lubricate valves and use valve wrench.